

SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 44. 2

NEW YORK AGENCY OF THE U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION, }
498 Broadway, July 4th, 1862. }

To all Loyal Citizens of the United States :

The Executive Committee of the United States Sanitary Commission, acting under authority from the National Government, is once more compelled to appeal to the People on behalf of the sick and wounded of the People's armies, east and west. For their relief it asks money and supplies—at once, and in abundance.

The necessity is too urgent to admit of any elaborate statement of its nature and extent, or of the work the Commission is doing. Some information on both points will be obtained from letters and papers herewith laid before the public. They have been taken almost at random, for there is not time even to look through the letters and reports in the hands of the Executive Committee. It is sufficient to add, that high officers, at many points, have repeatedly acknowledged the service rendered by the Commission, (or rather by the People of whom the Commission is an almoner,) to their respective commands, as of the highest value and importance.

From May 1st to July 1st, the Commission has expended \$37,585 $\frac{72}{100}$ dollars. About nine-tenths of this sum has been laid out in the purchase of hospital stores and appliances for the relief of the sick and wounded at every important military sta-

tion, and in the equipment of the flotilla of steamers and sailing vessels now in the service of the Commission as Hospital Transports. Its treasury is now nearly exhausted, at the very moment when the army most needs its aid, and when, if it had an hundred thousand dollars at its command, it would still be far too weak for the urgent work before it, and would still be obliged to see hundreds perishing for want of its aid, in the army of the Potomac alone.

Thousands of brave men are now lying without sufficient shelter, food, or attendance, in the camps and depots on James River. Very many of them are destined to perish who could have been preserved by a blanket, a suit of hospital clothing, and a few days' allowance of proper diet and stimulants instead of their ordinary rations. The Commission has saved hundreds if not thousands of men since this campaign began, by supplying these inexpensive wants. A very few dollars provides what can save a soldier's life, worth in mere money value hundreds of dollars to the army and to the community. At this time, of all others, the country cannot afford to waste the lives of men trained by a year's experience, and made veterans by the terrible week of continuous battle through which they have just triumphantly passed.

The Transport service of the Commission is also rendering indispensable aid to the country in bringing north men who would have perished if left in the malarious hospitals of Virginia, but who are enabled, after a short sojourn in a healthy northern climate, to rejoin their regiments.* By thorough system, complete ventilation, attention to all sanitary conditions, and a liberal supply of comforts and appliances, which Government does not yet provide, it is believed that these

* More than 10,000 sick and wounded men have thus been transported to the North by the Commission, with special attention to their care and comfort, up to this date.

“floating hospitals” have been made superior to those heretofore employed in the service of any country.

This is but a part of the work on which the Commission is engaged. But it is, at this moment, by far the most pressing. Its magnitude is appalling, in view of the multitude of those to whom the question whether help from the people shall reach them to-day or to-morrow is a question of life or death—and in view, also, of the moral certainty that a few days will increase that number by thousands. For the sake of this work, the Commission has thought it right to contract its other operations for the present, and concentrate its resources mainly on the relief of the sick and wounded on the Peninsula.

It may be said that Government should do all this without help from private charity. Were this true, the default of Government would not excuse us in leaving our soldiers to perish without an effort to save them. But it is only partially true. While active operations are in progress, and especially at the close of great battles, the prompt and thorough relief and treatment of the sick and wounded requires an amount of force, in men, material, and transportation, which no Government has heretofore been able to keep permanently attached to its medical department. At such times volunteer aid from without is indispensable to prevent the most fearful suffering, and waste of life, however faithful and untiring the Medical Staff may be. Such aid must be regularly organized, in order to be economical and efficient, and the Commission, with its large corps of officers and agents on the ground, experienced in their duties, and in confidential communication with the military authorities, seems the best organization through which the sympathy and affection of the people can reach and relieve the people's army.

It should be added, that the improvements lately made in the organization of the Medical Bureau, and the exertions of its able and energetic head, Surgeon-General Hammond, will,

in all probability, soon render a large and costly portion of the work originally undertaken by the Commission (that of Sanitary inspection) superfluous.

Contributions in money are earnestly solicited. They may be addressed to—

GEORGE T. STRONG, Treasurer of the Commission, 68 Wall street, New York.

THOMAS H. FAILE, Junr., Superintendent of N. Y. Agency, 498 Broadway.

HORACE BINNEY, Jr., 227 South Sixth street, Philadelphia.

Dr. S. G. HOWE, Boston.

FREDERICK LAW OLMTED, Secretary, &c., 244 F street, Washington.

Hon. MARK SKINNER, Chicago.

Dr. J. S. NEWBERRY, Cleveland.

Hon. GEO. HOADLEY, Cincinnati.

For the kind of supplies required, reference is made to the letter of Mr. A. J. Bloor, appended hereto. These supplies should be sent to the office of the Women's Central Relief Association, No. 10 Cooper Institute, N. Y., or to F. L. Olmsted, Secretary, 244 F street, Washington.

Among the supplies now most urgently needed are, vegetables, fresh or canned, as anti-scorbutics, beef stock, hospital clothing, and bedding.

By order of the Executive Committee.

G. T. STRONG,
Treasurer.

H. W. BELLOWS,
President.

I.

Copy Letter from F. L. Olmsted, Secretary to the Commission.

SANITARY COMMISSION FLOATING HOSPITAL, }
 Tender "Wilson Small," }
 White House, June 10th, 1862.

Mr. — goes to Philadelphia to-morrow, in attendance on his friend Mr. —, * whose strength has at length been entirely exhausted—not, however, until the wounded of the battle of Fair Oaks have ceased to require attention at this point. During the week since the engagement more than *four thousand* have passed through our hands—half this number having been taken away on the transports of the Commission. Scarcely the slightest provision had been made for them, except on these transports, and when they were not at the landing, the weight or care for the sustenance and comforting of the poor wretches sent in from the field by railroad, during the time they necessarily remained here, fell almost wholly on those of the Commission's agents who were not at the time detailed to either of the transports. Messrs. — and — were among these, and the protracted severity of the labor which they willingly undertook would have been possible only under the influence of the belief that lives depended on the last exertion of their energies, strained to the utmost, and that with men to whom the saving of life became a passion.

I am, my dear sir,

Most respectfully yours,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,

Resid. Secy.

CHARLES J. STILLÉ, Esq.,
 Philadelphia.

* The gentlemen referred to are two of the Commission's agents at White House.

II.

*Extract from Letter to Rev. H. W. Bellows, D.D., President,
Sanitary Commission.*

Off Harrison's Point, James River, }
July 1st, 1862. }

* * * * * For the wounded there is no provision :
no beef—none at all. They have scarcely begun to be collected yet. The
largest depôt will be four or five miles above here. * * * * * There
are a few hundred ashore here, nothing yet for them to eat. They will
begin loading them to night.

*Anything and everything that you can send is wanted in the largest
possible quantities. Buy all the beef stock and canned meats you can,
and ship by earliest opportunity. We shall have the Elizabeth here to-
night, and land her supplies at once, probably.*

Very respectfully yours,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED.

DR. BELLOWES.

III.

Letter from A. J. Bloor, Washington.

SANITARY COMMISSION,
Adams' House, 244 F street,
Washington, D. C., July 2d, 1862. }

Dear Sir,—I send you herewith the storekeeper's report, in copy, showing in detail the issues from the stores here for the third term of the month of June, that is from the 22d to the 30th, together with an abstract of the issues for each of the preceding terms of the same month, and a consolidation of the whole, showing the issues for the full month. By this you will perceive that the number of articles distributed has been very large. Of shirts over fourteen thousand (14,000); of towels, handkerchiefs, pillow-cases, and socks about eight thousand (8,000) each; of sheets and pillows about six thousand each (6,000); of quilts three thousand (3,000); of bed-ticks over two thousand (2,000); of drawers the return shows only four thousand two hundred (4,200), but this is simply because we have not had them to give. We have had applications for as many drawers as shirts—for more, I think. At the foot of the sheet I have added a line showing the stock left on hand yesterday (the first of this month.) By comparing the figures of this line with those which show

the issues for the period between the 22d, and 30th, inclusive, it will be seen that in a little over a week we have sent out much more than we now have on hand. Of quilts we have given in that time nearly double the amount of our present stock ; of shirts more than double the number ; of drawers, sheets, and bed-ticks nearly three times the number ; of socks *seven* times the number ; of pillows and cushions a third more ; and of pillow-cases about an equal quantity. These, with stimulants, beef-tea and farinacea, are the articles most in demand ; and of these latter the issue of stimulants for the whole month has largely exceeded the present stock ; while of farinacea, during the last month, twice the amount of that now on hand has been distributed, and for the entire month five times the amount.

At this rate the supplies of this Commission at this depot will not last more than a few days longer. I am, therefore, sending a copy of the last five lines of figures in this exhibit to each of our principal supply correspondents, viz., in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, New Haven, Providence, Portland, and Newark, so that they may for themselves see what the state of things is, and act accordingly, if they will or can act.

Yours, very respectfully,

ALFRED J. BLOOR.

Rev. H. W. BELLOWS, D.D.,
Prest., &c., &c., New York.

IV.

Letter from Dr. C. R. Agnew.

My Dear Mr. Strong,—I wish you could have been with me at White House during my late visit, to see how much is being done by our agents there to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and wounded soldiers. I have seen a good deal of suffering among our volunteers, and observed the marvellous variety and energy of the beneficence bestowed by the patriotic and philanthropic in camp, in hospital, and on transports for the sick ; but nothing has ever impressed me so deeply as this. Perhaps I can better illustrate my meaning by sketching a few of the daily labors of the agents of the Commission as I saw them. The sick and wounded were usually sent down from the front by rail, a distance of about twenty miles, over a rough road, and in the common freight cars. A train generally arrived at White House at 9 P. M., and another at 2 A. M. In order to prepare for the reception of the sick and wounded, Mr. Olmsted, with Drs. Jenkins and Ware, had pitched, by the side of the railway, at White House, a

large number of tents, to shelter and feed the convalescent. These tents were their only shelter while waiting to be shipped. Among them was one used as a kitchen and workroom or pantry by the ladies in our service, who prepared beef-tea, milk-punch, and other food and comforts, in anticipation of the arrival of the trains. By the terminus of the railway the large Commission steamboat *Knickerbocker* lay in the Pamunkey, in readiness for the reception of 450 patients, provided with comfortable beds and a corps of devoted surgeons, dressers, nurses, and litter-bearers. Just outside of this vessel lay the *Elizabeth*, a steam barge, loaded with the hospital stores of the Commission, and in charge of a store-keeper, always ready to issue supplies. As soon as a train arrived the moderately sick were selected and placed in the tents near the railroad and fed, those more ill were carried to the upper saloon of the *Knickerbocker*, while the seriously ill, or badly wounded, were placed in the lower saloon and immediately served by the surgeons and dressers. During the three nights that I observed the working of the system, about 700 sick and wounded were provided with quarters and ministered to in all their wants with a tender solicitude and skill that excited my deepest admiration. To see Drs. Ware and Jenkins, lantern in hand, passing thro' the trains selecting the sick with reference to their necessities, and the ladies following to assuage the thirst, or arouse, by judiciously administered stimulants, the failing strength of the brave and uncomplaining sufferers, was a spectacle of the most touching character. If you had experienced the debilitating influence of the Pamunkey climate, you would be filled with wonder at the mere physical endurance of our corps, who certainly could not have been sustained in the performance of duties, involving labor by day and thro' sleepless nights, without the most philanthropic devotion and the highest sense of christian duty.

At Savage's Station, too, the Commission had a valuable depot, where comfort and assistance was dispensed to the sick when changing from the ambulances to the cars. I wish I could do justice to the subject of my hasty narrative, or in any due measure convey to your mind the impressions left on mine in observing, even casually, the operations in the care of the sick at these two points.

When we remember what was done by the same noble band of laborers after the battles of Williamsburgh and Fair Oaks in ministering to the wants of *thousands of wounded*, I am sure nothing but feelings of gratitude and thankfulness of the most heartfelt kind can arise.

Yours sincerely,

C. R. AGNEW.

July 1, 1862.

